

OUR NAVAL ACTIVITY.

What Does It Mean?—Is Cuba in the Wind?

Will the President Recommend the Recognition of Cuban Liberty?

Sixty-three War-Vessels Now Actually Ready for Active Service.

Let Eleven Others Be Ready—The Whole Carrying 600 Guns.

CLOSURE'S RETURN.

News on the State of Cuba—Comments on the Situation.

The President's Return.

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NEBRASKA.

The State Restored to its Former Prosperity.

Magnificent Crops of Corn, Buckwheat, Turnips, and Potatoes.

Statements and Suggestions by Gen. James S. Brislin.

To the Editor of the Chicago Tribune.

O'MAHA, Nov. 28.—You will not doubt be glad to read the enclosed slip, cut from the Omaha Herald.

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BISMARCK AND ARMIN.

Fragments of Curious Letters—Revelations of the Ambassador.

Bismarck's Plans, and His Envoys' Determination.

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THE CALIFORNIA RACE.

Why It Was Postponed, and What Eastern Turbidity Had to Do With It.

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WANTED—MALE HELP.

Bookkeepers, Clerks, etc.

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TERMS OF THE TRIBUNE.

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AMUSEMENTS.

THEATRE-MADISON—Madison street, between Dearborn and State. Engagement of Harry Sullivan.
THEATRE-DEARBORN—Dearborn street, corner Madison. Engagement of the Kinky Troupe.
THEATRE-ROSELAND—Roseland street, between Dearborn and LaSalle. Engagement of the California Minstrels.
THEATRE-CLARK—Clark street, between Dearborn and LaSalle. Engagement of Kelly & Leon.
THEATRE-MONROE—Monroe street, between Dearborn and LaSalle. Engagement of the Kinky Troupe.
THEATRE-CLARK—Clark street, between Dearborn and LaSalle. Engagement of Kelly & Leon.
THEATRE-MONROE—Monroe street, between Dearborn and LaSalle. Engagement of the Kinky Troupe.

SOCIETY MEETINGS.

ILLINOIS SOCIETY—The Illinois Society will hold its annual meeting on Tuesday evening, 30th inst. Tickets 50 cents. Dinner 50 cents. D. M. C. 100 N. LaSalle. Evening 8 o'clock. Business meeting of the 8th at 7 o'clock.

The Chicago Tribune.

Monday Morning, November 29, 1875.

At the New York Gold Exchange on Saturday greenbacks ruled steady at 87 1/2.

Lieut. Gen. SHERMAN in his annual report devotes considerable attention to the Indian problem, which, he thinks, can be best solved by transferring the Indian Bureau to the charge of the War Department, to be taken under the general administration of the army. Gen. SHERMAN, who is an excellent authority on these points, believes that if the Indians were honestly and humanely dealt with, the Government would have less need of troops to keep the savages under proper subjection.

Prof. PATRICK may now call off his dogs and breathe freely once more. That terrible heretic, Prof. SWINO, yesterday severed his connection with the Fourth Presbyterian Church. But he will remain in Chicago and harrow up the soul of Prof. PATRICK by preaching in the heart of the city on an ordinary five times as large as that which was no able to gain admittance to the Fourth Church. No other city need apply. The Presbyterian Church has lost a great gospel, but Chicago at large has gained him.

Female members of the historic profession in Germany will hereafter be compelled to curb their propensity for low-necks, pull-backs, striped stockings, and other extravagances of dress on the stage. The Berlin critics, who are inordinately fond of the adjustments to high art, and having, it may be supposed, an intense antipathy to gorgeous military, have succeeded in procuring an order from the Government directed against both the dry-goods and the no-goods drama in Berlin.

A sermon by the Rev. E. F. WILLIAMS, of the Forty-seventh Street Congregational Church, on the subject of the Bible in the Schools, is printed in the Chicago Record. The gentleman takes the ground that it is unwise to insist upon Bible-reading as an exercise in the public schools, believing it to be a violation of the conscientious convictions of many good citizens, and in this way a species of tyranny and oppression which ought not to be countenanced by a Government professing to be republican in form.

After two or three years of stolid fanit- finding, the Eastern press is beginning to wake up to the fact that Chicago is exceptionally well protected against fire, and that cities which have been reproaching us have merely been playing the sacred drama of the beam and the mote; or, you're another and a bigger one. The New York Times, after duly crediting us with the invention of cheap fire-proof houses, and remarking that New York is liable to destruction by fire any day, ends its editorial by saying, "Let the example of Chicago be followed." This is sound advice. Only the well-known modesty pertaining to everything Chicagoan prevents our adding that in everything but a Municipal Government the city is one of the finest possible models of imitation.

There is still another fresh addition to the rumors concerning the Cuban question. It is reported in Washington that Spain has demanded of Guatemala the immediate revocation by that Republic of her recognition of the Cuban insurgents as belligerents, and that a similarly imperative demand has been made upon Bolivia, Colombia, and other South American Republics which have recognized the Cuban patriots. Rumor has it that a proper regard for the Monroe Doctrine will compel the United States to take the part of Guatemala and the rest as against the avenging aggressions of Spain, and that this new phase of the situation furnishes a more cogent explanation than any yet given of the extraordinary and continued preparations now going forward in the Navy Department.

Those interested in the fate of the persons involved in the whisky frauds will discover from the letter of Secretary BAZZOS to the Prospecting Attorney at St. Louis that there is no disposition on the part of the President to interfere in the most rigorous prosecutions. The Secretary, in repelling an intimation of his own interest in the case, and, showing the letter to the President, the latter bid him notify the law officers to "Let no guilty man escape." This letter will undoubtedly all those who have been assuming that the President did not fully approve of Mr. BAZZOS's policy of punishing the revenue frauds. The President heartily applauds the action of the Secretary, and there will be no interposition at headquarters to save the guilty.

The Chicago produce markets were irregular on Saturday. Mess pork was quiet and firm, closing at \$19.45@19.47; seller the year and \$19.55@19.57 for February. Lard was in fair demand and advanced to per 100 lbs. closing at \$12.85 cash and \$12.45 for Feb-

ruary. Meats were quiet, at 7 1/2c for shoulders, 10c for short ribs, and 10 1/2c for short clear, all boxed. Highwines were in fair demand and steady, at \$1.11 1/2 per gallon. Flour was dull and easier. Wheat was active and declined 1/2c, closing weak at \$1.04 1/2 cash and \$1.04 1/2 for December. Corn was active and declined 1/2c, closing at 49c for November and 47 1/2c for the year. Oats were quiet and 1/2c lower, closing at 30 1/2c cash and 30c for December. Rye was steady, at 59c. Barley was 1 1/2c lower, closing at 86 1/2c cash and 85 1/2c for December. Hogs were in moderate demand and steady, at \$6.90@7.00 per 100 lbs. Cattle and sheep were unchanged. One hundred dollars in gold would buy \$114.37 1/2 in greenbacks at the close.

The duty of the Grand Jury of the Criminal Court in relation to the admitted fact that a criminal confined in the County Jail was permitted to be at large on the day of the county election in order that he might cast one or more votes is forcibly and clearly set forth by a correspondent in another column. The state covering such cases is quoted to show the untenable position of Sheriff Axtell in claiming that the unlawful act of liberation was unknown to himself, and was the act of one of his subordinates. From the language of the statute it clearly appears that this plea, even if true, will not serve as a defense to the Sheriff, who alone is the custodian of prisoners in the County Jail. The path of the Grand Jury seems perfectly plain and unmistakable—so much so that a neglect by that body, now in session, to return an indictment against Sheriff Axtell could not be regarded as an act of favoritism and dereliction so gross and palpable as to subject the members of the Grand Jury to the liability of being themselves indicted to answer a charge of willful and intentional neglect to perform a sworn duty. They should not forget that even a Grand Jury may be made to suffer a penalty for the violation of law.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
 The Washington advices concerning our relations with Spain indicate a mysterious and irreconcilable state of things. The news from the State Department is to the effect that the Spanish Cabinet is in harmony with the Cuban question, and that there is the best of reasons for anticipating an amicable settlement of all the diplomatic points recently raised by the American notes. At the same time it is reported on what appears to be good authority that the Secretary of the Navy continues in secret the most extensive naval preparations; that the iron-clads have all been overhauled with reference to immediate active service; that the torpedo corps is likewise engaged in preparing torpedoes; and that orders have been sent to Lisbon recalling the entire Mediterranean squadron. It is impossible to reconcile these two reports with any information at hand. If there is no danger of any conflict with Spain, then there is nothing to justify the large and general expenditures on our naval service recently warranted by the appropriations made by the last Congress, which allowed the Navy Department some \$8,000,000 less than had been expended the previous year that included the expenditures on naval preparations because of the Virginia affair. Since the power to declare war is vested in Congress, it is fair to presume that the President, in sanctioning the continued preparations in the navy, has information of some serious complication or some impending menace which has not been made public.

At all events, these warlike preparations, which could not possibly be called out by any other foreign relations than those with Spain, furnish a proper question to say that the United States Government should not be betrayed into the danger of open hostility with Spain on any matter of a minor or technical nature. If diplomatic differences arise that threaten to stir up bad blood and lead to a breach in friendly relations, then it is better that the whole Spanish question shall be opened up on our commercial relations with Cuba readjusted upon a fair and equal basis. This is the real cause of complaint we have against Spain. It completely overshadows the right of counsel for American filibusters captured in giving aid and comfort to the Cuban rebels. It is more important than the abrogation of the unfair right of seizure claimed by the Spanish Government under the treaty of 1795, though we denied the same right to Great Britain long ago. It lies at the bottom of the whole question. So long as the Spanish Government insists upon continuing the present outrageous discrimination against American commerce, no amount of diplomatic tinkering will assure permanent peace and friendly relations. If, therefore, we are to have war or complications likely to lead to war, let them be on the broad basis of equal commercial rights.

The idea of our complaint is well known. It is the duty of two Spanish colonies in the West Indies nearly \$100,000,000 annually of their products, two of which—coffee and sugar—are almost as necessary to our people as bread and meat. We have commodities of our own needed in Cuba ample to pay for these products in kind. We can supply the wants of Cuba, all other things being equal, cheaper than any other nation. The Cubans consume, and if left to themselves would purchase from the American people, a sufficient quantity of breadstuffs and manufactures to very nearly balance the American purchases of Cuban products. As it is, we are obliged to pay a difference of nearly \$70,000,000 a year, or about the annual product of the gold and silver of American mines. The reason of it is to be found in the discriminating duties against the United States levied by the Spanish Government in the shape of import and export duties. If it were not for this discrimination, levied by Spain in order to extort from the Cubans the cost of running the Spanish Government, it would leave us practically our entire product of gold and silver with which to resume specie-payments to the United States. There is little wonder that there is an irrepressible rebellion in Cuba under these circumstances. If Great Britain (which permits its colonies to regulate their own commerce in their own way so long as they do not discriminate against the home Government) should undertake to impose the same burdens upon Canada, there would be rebellion there that would soon lead to Canadian separation and independence. The case is no different because Cuba is an American island instead of a part of the main continent.

If there is to be war or rumors of war, let the differences be probed to the core. There is no longer anything to be gained by the agitation of mere superficial disputes or punctilio. We have real grievances, if any issue is to be made. These, in common with the desire we must share with the remainder of the civilized world to see the last vestige of slavery in America wiped out, and the most cruel and hopeless evil strife of modern times brought to end, should be the *casus belli*, if a war is to come. It is weak and senseless to court the dangers and cost of a foreign war, or to incur the enormous expenses of restoring a naval service in decay, for any mere demonstration of strength or any temporary and trifling advantage in a diplomatic dispute. There is enough to justify war on the broad basis of civilization, humanity, and commercial rights, if the American people are not prepared to undertake it. But there is not enough in the diplomatic differences that have been made public so far to justify the preparations that are said to be going on in secret. We shall probably have to await the President's message before reaching a satisfactory explanation of the conflicting reports that now come to us.

MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES.
 In THE TRIBUNE yesterday we discussed the striking distinction between the efficiency and integrity, the economy and fidelity, with which the Governments of England and Germany administered when compared with like Governments in the cities of the United States. In nothing is the extravagance and wastefulness of our American Municipal Governments so remarkable as in the inordinate allowances and profits of the office-holders. We find in the New York Times a review of the salaries paid to local officers in that city at this time, and this is under a Municipal Government which has reformed out of existence all the sinners and abuses which flourished under the Tweed Regency. We note a few instances:

The Mayor of the city receives \$12,000 a year. There are 21 Aldermen and 24 Assistants, who each receive \$1,000 a year, with \$1,000 extra to each of the presiding officers of the Board, making an aggregate of \$181,000. The expenses of the office of the Clerk of the Council aggregates over \$40,000 a year. The Times tabulates the cost of managing the United States Treasury and the Treasury Department of the City of New York, as follows:

General Government. City Government.

Secretary Treasury, \$10,000,000; Comptroller, \$10,000; Assistant Secretary, \$10,000; Assistant Comptroller, \$10,000; Clerk of the Council, \$10,000; Clerk of the Board, \$10,000; Auditor, \$10,000; Treasurer, \$10,000; Receiver, \$10,000; Director of the Mint, \$10,000; Director of the Customs, \$10,000; Director of the Quarantine, \$10,000; Director of the Marine, \$10,000; Director of the Fisheries, \$10,000; Director of the Commerce, \$10,000; Director of the Education, \$10,000; Director of the Public Works, \$10,000; Director of the Police, \$10,000; Director of the Fire, \$10,000; Director of the Health, \$10,000; Director of the Charity, \$10,000; Director of the Prison, \$10,000; Director of the Asylums, \$10,000; Director of the Hospitals, \$10,000; Director of the Dispensaries, \$10,000; Director of the Public Buildings, \$10,000; Director of the Public Parks, \$10,000; Director of the Public Gardens, \$10,000; Director of the Public Libraries, \$10,000; Director of the Public Museums, \$10,000; 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